

OF
WIT
Triumphant over
BEAUTY
A
POEM

*WIT, whene'er you wound, vouchsafe to heal;
And, before strike deep enough to kill.*

BY
JOHN LITTLETON COSTEKER, Gent.

L O N D O N,

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KOZ IANON

W I





To Her GRACE the
D U T C H E S S
O F
R I C H M O N D.

M A D A M,

A Ccept the Tribute of my humble Lays,
Due to thy Beauty worthy more than Praise,
In all the sweet Mæanders Love has run,
He ne'er could boast the Conquest you have won,

Over the noble RICHMOND's Heart, a Prize
Inestimable ! yet to 's CLOE's Eyes
It owes a sweet Captivity, and there
VICTORIA ! most conspicuous doth appear !
Recorded in the Noble Book of Fame,
There stands the charming beauteous CLOE's Name,
Known by the great Characterick it bears
Of heavenly Vertues, and her blooming Years !
PYGMALION only for a Statue mourn'd,
And pray'd that it to Woman might be turn'd,
The Masterpiece of Art !—while we in You,
With Extasy, the Art of Nature view !
Thy great Example now my Muse inspires,
With Emulation and Poetick Fires ;
PROMETHEUS stole his Flame from Heaven; but now
I'll be presumptuous, and steal mine from You :
Too happy ! would thy Condescension bless
These Lines, and own them as their Patroness :

CLOE

DEDICATION.

CLOE in every Verse shall then appear,
Her Wit, her Beauty, and majestick Air;
'Till every Breast with Admiration own
You the unrival'd Phoenix of the Town.

I am, MADAM,

With the greatest Respect,

Your GRACE'S

most Dutiful,

most Obedient, and

most Humble Servant,

JOHN LITTLETON COSTEKER.

DEBATE

On the Motion of Mr. W. H. ...
The ...
The ...
The ...

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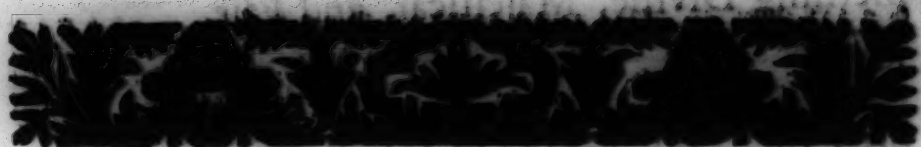
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ALEXIS *and* SILENA.

MAN was an Embryo in great Chaos'
Womb,
Till Fate ordain'd the Time that he shou'd
come

Into th' amazing World, and to the Earth
Ow'd his Corporeal, but not spirit'al Birth:
That was to God! alone, his Soul conjoin'd;
And form'd the great Perfections of the Mind.
Imperfect yet, without Society,
Life is a Burthen to Humanity:
Then did our Wise Creator think it meet,
That WOMAN shou'd his Happiness compleat:

The Great Command obey'd, she did appear
 Something Divine, Majestical, and Fair.

Soar then, my Muse, in softest Accents tell,
 In whom the Graces and the Virtues dwell;
 Say with what Judgment glorious Nature join'd,
 Celestial Beauties to a heav'nly Mind.

Behold, ye Nymphs! the Fair SILENA's come;
 See in her Cheeks the blushing Roses bloom!
 Observe her Air, her Mien; with what a Grace
 Each rival Beauty challenges a Place;
 Nature in all her Glory seems to move,
 Nurs'd in her infant Veins a noble Love,
 And gave her Wit and Judgment, to approve.
 How gay, how charming, do her Smiles appear,
 Fill us at once with Extasy and Fear!
 As if, we conscious our Approach wou'd be
 To something so Divine——Temerity.

What

What Pleasure runs in her refined Sense,
 And, Gods! what Charms are in her Eloquence?
 Each Word a double Emphasis imparts,
 And wounds at once our Fancy and our Hearts.
 BEAUTY! thou sov'reign Mistress of the Field,
 Kings are but Subjects, when to you they yield:
 Princes no Power can boast, if once they view
 Those charming Attributes that dwell in you.
 The Gods, SILENA, You to Us have given,
 Purely to shew th' Epitome of Heaven.
 But tell me (Fair One) why was you severe,
 And why torment'st me thus, and persevere
 In amorous Feints? Was it to tyrannize,
 To shew you Woman, or to make me wise?
 That needless was, (my Charmer) I'll confess,
 Unless my Power was greater, yours less.
 Heavens! that you shou'd think that I cou'd be
 Scorned of all that Beauty that's in thee!
 Or that the Conquest wou'd not make me prove
 False to myself, as soon as to my Love!

O what (my Life) was it cou'd make thee be
 Guilty of such a Diffidence in me ?
 Thy ev'ry Charm, my Faith to you secures,
 Thy Captive once, we are for ever yours.

SILENA.

O blame me not, ALEXIS, when I say,
 Your too-fallacious Sex wou'd ours betray ;
 With subtile Arts, and ev'ry vain Pretence,
 You strive to countermine our Innocence.
 Our Sex, you'll say, is hard to be deceiv'd,
 But your's is harder much to be believ'd.
 How oft have I, beneath yon' Cypress Shade,
 Where first (Oh! blest Place) our Vows were made,
 Forlorn, abandon'd by a perjur'd Swain,
 Heard the forsaken EMILIE complain
 Of the inconstant CORYDON, and cry,
 Whither, (my Charmer) whither will you fly ?
 Why wilt thou go, why do'st neglectful prove
 Of me, my Charms, my Sighs, my Tears, and Love ?

BEAUTY

over BEAUTY.

BEAUTY had lost its Power o'er him, you see,
Might it not have the same Effect on thee?

ALEXIS.

Yes, were but thine inferiour unto hers,
Or my impetuous Flames to burn less fierce;
When Charms, like thine, expand their Influence,
In vain's, alas! the Plenitude of Sense;
In vain the sacred Dotards all display
The Force of Reason, and Philosophy.
BEAUTY is irresistible, and then,
Oh! tell me, how invincible are Men?

SILENA.

The subtle Traytor, e'er he's touch'd, he feigns
To feel the Weight of **BEAUTY**'s pond'rous Chains;
In each incautious Fair wou'd Pity move,
And tries her Truth, with his fictitious Love.
Are these not Arms, are these not Man's Defence?
Too oft victorious o'er our Innocence.

We're

WIT *Triumphant*

We're fond to listen, fonder to believe,
Till, unsuspected, we ourselves deceive.
Woman, unto Credulity's so prone,
Tell her she's fair, a thing before unknown,
And what her Glass will contradict, she'll own.

This is our Foible ; nay, shou'd we recant,
Success wou'd flatter ev'ry Sycophant ;
Men are so vain, and so pedantick grown,
Degenerate Fops are scarce from Women known.
Vain-Glory check'd Great ALEXANDER's Praise,
When he was scorn'd by poor DIOGENES :
Our Sex, like him, shall now disdain the Fools,
And ev'ry Coxcomb meet with a Repulse.
Then tell me, (dear ALEXIS) tell me why
Shou'd BEAUTY unto Fools become a Prey,
Since nought is its Competitor but WIT,
And that, in Men of Sense alone, compleat ;
Only to them—when they can faithful prove,
The Gods design'd it the Reward of Love.

ALEX-

ALEXIS.

Then none, (my fairest Charmer) none but I,
Have greater Claims for my Fidelity ;
Count all the Love-sick Hours which I have spent,
Stars that adorn the spangled Firmament ;
Count all the Sands the *British* Shore contains,
And Drop by Drop the swelling Surges drain ;
Count ev'ry verdant Leaf that clothes the Trees,
When *Zephyrs* whisper to the murm'ring Breeze ;
Count all those tender Wishes Lovers send,
When cruel Absence intercepts the Friend ;
Recall each fav'rite Echo born in Air,
Swifter than Light'ning to the wishing Fair ;
Till then, SILENA, nor till then reprove
Me as the false Abjurer of my Love.

If you distrust my Passion, hear me swear
By you, my Goddess, you, my heav'nly Fair ;

Lawyers shall sooner far forget their Fees,
The Miser griping, or thy Beauty please ;
Courtiers forbear to flatter, Scolds to chide,
And vain Coquettes to scorn their darling Pride ;
The Sun no more obey the heavenly Powers,
Than I forbear to be for ever yours.

SILENA.

'Tis not, ALEXIS, that I thought you'd change,
But Lovers often are too apt to range :
Thus when a second beauteous Face appears,
The former rival'd Nymph too oft despairs.
The Reason thus I scan : That Love is free,
An unconfined fickle Deity ;
Never to be suppress'd by Wisdom's Laws,
Nor can our Reason comprehend the Cause.
LOVE is a Worm conceal'd within the Eyes,
There breeds and lives, but in the Heart it dies ;
And as CAMELIONS only live on Air,
So that's by HOPE preserved from Despair.

HOPE

HOPE is Love's true Companion, that and Faith
 Are fit to conquer OMNIPOTENT DEATH.
 But those are Virtues seldom found in Man,
 Unless fictitious when they wou'd trapan——
 I guess your Meaning, WOMAN, you wou'd say,
 First taught the simple Animal to stray,
 By Use since learn'd a more refined Way.
 NATURE in each Existent doth improve,
 MEN in their Falshood, WOMEN in their Love.

ALEXIS.

What if I own thy Accusation just?
 I wrong my Sex, myself—but yet I must;
 BEAUTY! in spite of all I cou'd have said,
 Exerts her Power, and must be now obey'd.
 'Tis NATURE's Privilege she claims her Due,
 For having shewn her Master-piece in You.

SILENA.

Oh! now, ALEXIS, now you make me own
 'A Fault in you, I thought not to have done :
 I was resolving then to justify
 Your Words, by not suspecting Flattery.
 I know myself, already to my Cost,
 What little Share of BEAUTY I can boast ;
 I have no Angel's Form, no Angel's Sense,
 Their Face, no Charms, unless my Innocence ;
 Nothing in me immortal but my Soul,
 Nor nothing that can swell a Hyperbole.
 In things divisible, you all confess,
 There's something equal, something more or less.
 In either Sex, when WIT and BEAUTY meet,
 Nothing's more equal, nothing more complete :
 If BEAUTY feeds the Eye, WIT feeds the Sense,
 One Pleasure gives the other Eloquence,
 And both have their Degree of Excellence.

They

They both have equal Charms, alike impart
 The secret Message to the wounded Heart.
 Nothing so soon as WIT can raise Desire,
 Nothing like BEAUTY fan the Lover's Fire.
 Man having WIT and POLICY to rule,
 Does quite revert the Law of Nature's School ;
 Were he not rational, by Strength you'd see,
 BEASTS wou'd be RULERS, and the Subject, HE.

But WIT in WOMEN, as great PLATO taught,
 Is, in excess, a Virtue or a Fault ;
 Like Oil in Flames, it feeds their Vanities,
 Or with their Virtues grows—expires and dies.

ALEXIS.

Those in their best Perfections now we view,
 Conspicuous in that Demi-Angel, You !
 All that is Lovely, Beautiful, and Great,
 (With *PHILOSOPHICK JUSTICE,) in You meet :

* Philosophick Justice is fourfold ; 1st, Celestial ; 2^d, Natural ;
 3^d, Civil ; and the 4th, Judicial.

In vain wou'd all our boasted *WIT* appear,
Was't not employ'd on some Angelick Fair.

TRUTH is the Law of Arts, whose Champions be
WISDOM, and an eternal *CONSTANCY* ;
Two noble Generals in Great *BEAUTY*'s Field,
Victorious Arms to make a Lover yield.

TRUTH is a Pledge can never be impair'd,
A Shield ne'er pierc'd, a State that can't be fear'd ;
A Flower immortal, knows no Change nor Fate,
Is Fortune's Victor, and the Death of Hate ;
That Goddess' Wings expanded, reach so far,
From Pole to Pole, and touch the Atmosphere :
That is the Centre in which Mortals move,
The Shield of Virtue, Nourisher of Love.

TRUTH is the Ground of Science, that alone
Can bring ten thousand Miracles to one ;
Fountain of Grace, the Scale to Charity,
Scourge of a guilty Conscience, and a Lye ;

When

When those appear, then Self-Conviction shew,
TRUTH to be Judge, and the Accuser too.

Then tell me, dear SILENA, tell me why,
Man is so fond of such an Enemy
As FALSHOOD ; since the little Joy it brings,
Has always such acute tormenting Stings.

SILENA.

'Tis only thus : when VANITY appears,
Dress'd in her taudry a-la-modish Airs ;
That some, more vicious Coxcomb than the rest,
Wou'd fain be thought by her the greatest—Beast.
WIT, I shou'd say, but now their Impudence
Have got th' Ascendant o'er the Men of Sense.
How oft have I a flutt'ring Pedant seen,
Vain of his Shape, his Air, his aukward Mien,
Strut in the *Mall*, and ev'ry Nymph surprize,
Stare in her Face, as if he'd steal her Eyes ?

If

If she but chance to smile—perhaps to see
 The Part of * C—ER acted awkwardly;
 The vain Result wou'd to the Fop impart,
 And tell him that his Eyes had reach'd her Heart.
 Vain Man, alas! are thy Demerits such?
 You give too little, and you take too much:
 'Tis then the saucy Jackanapes presumes,
 That his Jack-Pudding Coat, or his Perfumes,
 His Fortune, Title, or bonne Assurance,
 Or, for Rhime-sake, suppose it Ignorance,
 Will plead Admittance to th' unwilling Fair,
 Then 'twould be pity she shou'd be severe.
 'Tis WOMAN's great Prerogative to rule
 Over that harmless Animal—a Fool;
 They'll use 'em too, as Men will do their W—res,
 To serve their turn—then kick 'em out of doors.
 They have no Souls fram'd for great Actions fit,
 But measure out our BEAUTY by their WIT.

* Sir FOPLING FLUTTER.

Their servile Fear oppres their Coward Souls;
 To love's too great an Enterprize for Fools ;
 Tho' sometimes prompted their Success to try
 With us, not out of Love, but Vanity :
 'Tis then, ALEXIS, then we see the Cheat,
 And by their Nonsense prove the Counterfeit :
 When if we scorn, or feign not to believe,
 'Tis then they study Falshoods to deceive
 The credulous Fair, by Flatt'ry sometimes won,
 Our darling Foible, sees herself undone :
 'Tis then the Wretch disdains, and she too late
 Is fell a Victim to the Monster's Hate.

Where's then the Force of BEAUTY? Virtue's
 Charms,

In my opinion's much the stronger Arms ;
 That neither goes by Birth, nor by Descent,
 And in the Soul is only resident.
 First, to be Virtuous, learn HUMILITY,
 The safest Guide to IMMORTALITY.

Let JUSTICE reign in ev'ry Act thou dost,
And have no PRIDE, but to be ever just;
Ne'er value BEAUTY for an outward shew,
But think her handsome that will handsome do.

WOMEN are all by Nature prone to Pride,
ENVY declares what MODESTY shou'd hide;
Out of a vainer shew of Ostentation,
The Pride of Knowledge was our first Transgression.
Eternal RUIN: Vain inglorious MAN,
Was the victorious King of *Macedon*;
Who when the Son of Great AGESILAUS,
To daunt his Pride, desir'd to know the Cause;
If since his Conquests, his own Shadow bore
A greater Measure than it did before?

PRIDE thus debas'd, proves in the meanest Souls
The Bane of Mis'ry, and the Food of Fools:
But tell me, (dear ALEXIS) if you can,
What is the Passion JEALOUSY in Man?

ALEX-

ALEXIS.

NO Ixion or TANTALUS cou'd find
Not half the Torments of a jealous Mind ;
Continual Wars doth with the Conscience wage,
Suppressing REASON, and inciting RAGE ;
As Vultur on PROMETHEUS' Vitals preys,
Just so the JEALOUS MAN, while living, dies ;
Suspicious, restless, envious, discontent,
His Shadow frightens what it represents.
True to himself, but of himself afraid,
Lest by himself, himself shou'd be betray'd ;
His Passions rise with him, and he with them,
And JEALOUSY is *semper eadem*.

Uncertain is the Cause from whence it springs,
But 'tis defin'd the most accurs'd of things ;
But most agree the Source of it is such,
From our too little LOVE, or else too much.

WIT Triumphant

SILENA.

It may be so: but yet I cannot grant
 It incident to any but th' Ignorant;
 For sure where'er Affection's plac'd, it must
 Be term'd a noble, gen'rous Act, and just;
 A Debt to WIT, to LOVE, and MERIT due,
 And shou'd I own a Creditor——'tis You.

ALEXIS.

BEAUTY! thou all-sufficient powerful Charm,
 With new Conceits my longing Fancy warm;
 The more our Grace and Goodness do encrease,
 The more our Souls to God themselves address;
 The more SILENA, heavenly Nymph! appears,
 Thy gen'rous Gift, when Choice dispels my Fears;
 The more I'll prize what you yourself have given,
 And think myself but one Degree from Heaven.

There is no anxious Thought can vex me now,
 But ev'ry thing is pleasing, bless'd with you;

The

The Sun shall sooner leave the upper World,
 And be to dark Confusion ever hurl'd;
 Snow to congeal, and Fire forget to burn,
 And to our Mother CHAOS all return:
 Than I unjust to Thee, SILENA, prove,
 Since You with BEAUTY have repaid my LOVE.

CONSTANCY's the *Nepenthes*, and the Mind,
 Once tasted of it, proves for ever kind;
 If that the Soul's depress'd with Care or Grief,
 That in Oblivion drowns, and yields Relief.
 MUSICK hath Charms which none but Lovers know,
 At once both pleases, and augments their Woe.
 DANCING's the Character of the World's Consent,
 Heaven's great Figure, and Earth's Ornament.
 CHOICE is a Virtue, in which Judgment is
 The Helm that guides Us to our Happiness.

The BEAUTY of the Mind is CHASTITY,
 Whose first Degree is pure VIRGINITY;
 VIRTUE and Goodness, which no time controul,
 At once compleat the BEAUTIES of the Soul.

These are the BEAUTIES which our REASON says,
 Are worthy all the ENERGY of PRAISE:
 If so, why then, SILENA, then to You
 All that the ALPHABET contains is due;
 Numbers on Numbers, Words on Words shall run,
 Eternal Parallels to gain the sum
 Of Praise, Thy BEAUTY's Due; but all in vain,
 ARITHMETICK the Total can't contain.
 Thus as the vain presumptuous PHAETON,
 Thought he cou'd rule the Chariot of the Sun,
 The winged Coursers cleave the yielding Air,
 O'erthrow their Guide, and set the World on fire:

Just such a vain Attempt wou'd be my own,
To undertake to make thy Virtues known.
Believe, cou'd Numbers or my Tongue express,
I wou'd not lose so great a Happiness;
But wanting GENIUS, WIT, my trembling Pen,
When I attempt to write, rebounds agen:
Since all I am ambitious it shou'd do,
Is to eternize my Great Blessing——You.
Fond Fool am I, to think my feeble WIT
Cou'd end a Task no less than INFINITE;
I look, I praise, admire, I write, and then
I view (imperfect all) I've done agen:
Fancy myself sometimes imperial JOVE,
And only to immortalize my LOVE.
Fancy retorts, and ends where it began,
And shews me only what I was——a MAN;
Then how can I, vain Wretch! attempt to raise
Divine SILENA's more than mortal Praise?

Oh!

I am ambitious in the old

and I do not, to think my record is

and a Task not less than

and I find, that I have

view (important and I have

fancy my old friends in

And only to immortalize my

fancy record, and to

And how

Then how can

Owing SILVERA's

